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EXCISE

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
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AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 OUAGADOUGOU 6117
PARIS FOR MURPHY; DAKAR FOR RLO
E.O. 12065: GDS, 11/18/86 (GRAHL, LARRY C) OR-M
TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, PINR, UV
SUBJECT: UPPER VOLTAN TEACHERS STRIKE: EVOLUTION AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS
1. (C) SUMMARY: FORTY-EIGHT DAYS OLD TODAY, THE TEACHERS STRIKE HAS MUSHROOMED INTO A RALLYING CAUSE FOR GOUV OPPONENTS AND A LITMUS TEST FOR THE LAMIZANA REGIME.

2. THE TEACHERS STRIKE HAS BECOME A WAR OF NERVES - MUSHROOMING INTO A "CAUSE CELEBRE" FOR THE UNIONS, GOUV AND OPPOSITION. AT THIS JUNCTURE, AS THE STRIKE MOVES INTO ITS EIGHTH WEEK, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO REVIEW THE STRIKE'S ORIGIN, EVOLUTION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE POLITICS OF THE THIRD REPUBLIC.
3. (U) THE UNION DEMANDS FIRST MADE IN JUNE, WERE THREE-- INCREASED BENEFITS FOR HOUSING AND TRASPORTATION. AGREEMENT FROM THE UNION ON ANY TRANSXAOMLEY GOVERNMENT OF TEACHERS WHO ARE UNION MEMBERS, AND EQUAL TREATMENT OF ALL TEACHERS ELIGIBLE FOR OUT-OF-COUNTRY SCHOLARSHIP TRAINING

OPPORTUNITIES. THE GOUV MET THE FIRST DEMAND, BUT BALKED AT THE OTHERS. IT POINTED OUT THAT TEACHERS ARE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND AS SUCH SUBJECT TO TRANSFER. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO DECLARED FAIR TREATMENT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO ALL TEACHERS WHO TOOK THE TEST FOR FURTHER TRAINING AND DENIED THAT THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION'S WIFE, WHO WON SUCH A SCHOLARSHIP, RECEIVED PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT.

4. (U) THE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, WHOSE UNION IS AFFILIATED WITH THE MILITANT CONFEDERATION OF VOLTAN UNIONS (CSV), MET THIS REBUFF WITH A SCHOOL BOYCOTT. THE STRIKE STARTED OFF SLOWLY AND GAINED MOMENTUM AS OPPOSITION POLITICIANS MANEUVERED BEHIND THE SCENE. THREE OTHER UNION CENTRALS AGREED TO JOIN THE CSV IN A GENERAL STRIKE NOVEMBER 4 AND 5. HOWEVER, SENSING THAT STRIKE ISSUES WERE UNPOPULAR THEY GAVE ONLY LUKEWARM SUPPORT. AFTER A BRIEF LULL PUNCTUATED BY HEATED RALLIES AT UNION HALL, THE STRIKE

ERUPTED IN VIOLENCE ON THURSDAY, NOV 13. THE SECURITY FORCES WERE READY AND WAITING FOR A DEMONSTRATION OF UNION SUPPORTERS WHICH HAD BEEN DECREED ILLEGAL BY PRESIDENT LAMIZANA THE NIGHT BEFORE. ARRESTS WERE MADE, BUT ALMOST ALL WERE RELEASED AFTER SEVERAL HOURS. DAYTIME PATROLS CONTINUE BUT DISCREETLY. THERE IS NHTOTKZNTCEROF ANY TYPE OF UNUSUAL ACTIVITY AT NIGHT.

5. (LOU) TWO CONFLICTING INTERPRETATIONS ARE BEING GIVEN ABOUT DEMONSTRATORS: (1) THEY WERE PAID BY UNIONS AND "OTHERS" TO BRING ABOUT A CONFRONTATION AND (2) THEY ARE JUST A SMALL SAMPLING OF A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRESENT SITUATION AND WANT TO SEE SOME CHANGES IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. EMBOFFS WHO SAW A CONFRONTATION AGREE THAT PARTICIPANTS ALL APPEARED TOO YOUNG AND CASUALLY DRESSED TO BE TEACHERS. AT LEAST SOME UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PARTICIPATED.

6. (C) THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS CONFIDENT THAT ITS RESPONSES TO DATE ARE APPROPRIATE FOR THE PRESENT CRISIS AND ARE SUPPORTED BY MOST OF THE POPULATION OF OUAGADOUGOU. THE

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PARIS FOR MURPHY; DAKAR FOR RLO
STRATEGY OF THE GOUV IS TO ISOLATE THE CSV LEADERS AND TO
SHOW TO THE POPULATION THAT THE UNION DEMANDS ARE CLEARLY
UNACCEPTABLE.

ON
NOVEMBER1, CSV LEADER SOUMANE TOURE WHILE IN BOBO-DIOULASSO
CAME VERY CLOSE TO BEING MAULED BY ANGRY PARENTS AND
REPORTEDLY ESCAPED ONLY AFTER REIVING ASSISTANCE FROM GOUV
SECURITY FORCES.
. (C) THE GOVERNMENT DECREE OF NOVEMBER 12 BANNING ALL
DEMONSTRATIONS WAS A FURTHER ATTEMPT TO ISOLATE THE UNION
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LEADERS AND MEMBERS.

PROHIBITION, WERE SMALL--200-500 PEOPLE-- AND VERY DISORGANIZED
OTHER UNIONS, WHICH DID INITIALLY LEND THEIR SUPPORT TO THE
TEACHERS AND CSV, HAVE NOW STEPPED OUT OF THE PICTURE
ALL TOGETHER.
5. (C) ALL OBSERVERS AGREE THAT THE TEACHERS STRIKE, CALLED
ON RELATIVELY MINOR POINTS, HAS BEEN SUBSUMED INTO A
MANIFESTATION OF POLITICAL DISCONTENT. THE GOUV POSITION
WAS MOST RECENTLY STATED BY PRESIDENT LAMIZANA WHO INDICATED
THAT THE TEACHERS ARE NO LONGER IN CONTROL OF WHAT IS
HAPPENING IN THEIR ORGANIZATION AND THEY ARE BEING USED BY
POLITICAL AGITATORS.
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